

"yeah, she's a redhead but what color's her  
cunt?" we used to ask  
standing in front of the  
butcher shop.  
and I remember when poolhalls were poolhalls  
not just tables inside  
bars.  
and I remember when women  
used to cook huge pots of beefstew for a  
man when it  
rained and his belly was sick with  
drink.  
and I remember when the kids used to watch it rain  
for hours and  
would fight to the death over a pet  
rat. and  
I remember when the boxers were Jewish and Irish  
and never gave you a  
bad one, and the two-wingers flew so low you  
could see the pilot's face and  
goggles, and each icecream bar had one free stick in  
ten, and for 4 cents you could buy enough candy  
to make you sick  
or last a whole  
afternoon. and the people in the neighborhood raised  
chickens in their backyards, and we'd stick a 5 cent  
toy auto full of  
candlewax and they'd last us  
forever, and we built our own kites and scooters  
and cars,  
and when our parents fought  
you could hear them for blocks  
and they fought for hours, screaming blood-death cries  
and the cops never  
came.

places to hunt and places to hide,  
they're not any longer around  
anymore.  
each 4th space was a vacant lot and the landlord  
only got your rent  
when you had  
it, and each day was clear and good and each moment  
wild.

#### A Northern Acquaintance

there is one writer --  
among others --  
I never cared much  
for, but we wrote  
letters a while.  
he lived in Canada  
and made his own  
wine.

and was always  
winning  
Grants. also, his  
wife worked.  
there were always  
photos of him  
in an undershirt  
pecking down  
with big hands  
at a delicate machine  
down between  
his knees.  
and there was the  
cigarette, of  
course.

we are all literary  
hustlers, I wrote  
him.

I'm not sure he  
understood.

I don't know  
what has happened  
to him  
lately. sometimes the  
Grants stop  
and the wives  
run  
away.

I suppose he's still at it  
though --  
winning the Governor's Prize  
and  
writing about  
eskimos and  
whales.

although the best thing  
he ever did was  
make his own  
wine.

-- Charles Bukowski

Los Angeles, CA

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